



LEMUR FACT SHEET

JUNE 2022

What is the Low End Market Rental (LEMUR) Program?

Launched in 2007, the Low End Market Rental Program (LEMUR) allows developers of more than 60 residential units on one site to build more densely than normally allowed in exchange for including units that will be rented below market value, or for a “cash-in-lieu” contribution to the City’s Affordable Housing Reserve Fund. (For developments of less than 60 units, developers provide a “cash in lieu” contribution.)

Why does it matter? The LEMUR Program is a cornerstone of the City of Richmond’s plan to address affordable housing. Essentially it grants bonuses to developers in exchange for the construction of LEMUR units.

As of March, 2022, there were about **545 LEMUR** units in the City of Richmond. They are listed in the City’s Affordable Housing Guide (January 2022) along with contact information for the developer, owner or manager.

This is great, isn’t it? Well, in a way, except that “affordable housing” in this context is only **20% below market rental** – which at current market rates is not affordable for many. Also, some of these LEMUR units are going to family members of the developers. There is **no central registry or waitlist** to apply for LEMUR units so it is not clear how, or if, the program works.

Residents of Richmond should have a clear picture of how the LEMUR program works. After all, we are the ones that fund City Hall.

The Richmond Poverty Reduction Coalitions requests that all LEMUR units in the city of Richmond be tenanted and re-tenanted through a central waitlist with clear criteria for eligibility.

What can I do? Ask the City of Richmond to establish and maintain a registry and waitlist for those applying for the LEMUR units, and that the registry be limited to potential renters who have a “Richmond connection.”

JOIN US AND SPEAK UP FOR FAIRNESS!